



Immediate Actions for Peace and Stability in Afghanistan

10 Recommendations to Avoid Civil War and Protect the Gains of the Past Twenty Years

This document was prepared for the U.S. Congress by the Afghanistan-U.S. Democratic Peace and Prosperity Council in consultation with senior leadership from the Parliament of Afghanistan including in the Human Rights Civil Society and Women's Affairs Committee and the Defense Committee. The future of Afghanistan's democracy, women, youth, and civil society are now threatened by a Taliban military takeover. Congress must take immediate and bold action to protect the gains of the last twenty years, protect the women and children of Afghanistan and to prevent the country from once again becoming a safe haven for terrorist groups.

1. **At a Minimum, Maintain FY22 ASSF Funding at the FY21 Level of \$4.015B**
 - *Supports Afghan peace negotiators by signaling to the Taliban that the ANDSF will continue to have a strong force posture and cannot be easily defeated on the battlefield.*
 - *Maintains the ANDSF as a strong counter terrorism force and the last line of defense for the gains of the past twenty years.*
 - *Afghanistan had a 5% drop in GDP last year and cannot afford to allocate any more funds to the ANDSF.*

2. **Make the Rights of Women and Girls a Non-Negotiable Requirement for International Support of a Peace Agreement and Power Sharing Government**
 - *The women and girls of Afghanistan should not be forced to lose their rights as part of a peace agreement. The Afghan and American people, along with NATO allies, fought so hard to win and preserve these rights.*
 - *If the Taliban want international recognition, and aid for a power sharing government, they must agree to maintain all rights for women and girls as they stand today and immediately open all schools for girls in territories under their control.*

3. **Maintain Air Combat Support and Counter Terrorism Support through Regionally Based U.S. Air Assets**
 - *Taliban attempts to capture population centers in Afghanistan must be met with airstrikes from U.S. forces. As recently as October 2020, U.S. air support stopped an attempted Taliban takeover of Helmand province. Even now, amidst the troop withdrawal, U.S. airstrikes are supporting the ANDSF to thwart major Taliban offensives against several population centers.*
 - *The U.S. intelligence community and the ANDSF have a close working relationship in the fight against terrorism. While the U.S. provides intelligence collection and targeting, the ANDSF conducts frontline combat operations. To maintain this strong counter terrorism alliance, the U.S. must continue its intelligence collection, and drone operations at current levels.*

4. **Maintain Pressure on Regional Countries to Compel the Taliban to Negotiate a Ceasefire and Power Sharing Agreement**
 - *Regional countries including Pakistan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia maintain significant influence over the Taliban. The U.S. must work closely with these countries and others in the region to compel the Taliban back to the negotiating table and to agree to a compromise solution.*

5. **Leverage the 7,000 Taliban Prisoners in Afghan Government Custody, the Taliban's status on the U.N. Terrorist Blacklist, and the Taliban's Desire for Continued Aid to Afghanistan to Secure a Compromise Solution from the Taliban**
 - *Two of the Taliban's primary demands at the negotiating table are the release of 7,000 of its prisoners held in Afghan government custody and the group's removal from the U.N. terrorist blacklist. The Taliban has also expressed strong interest in securing continued development and humanitarian funding for Afghanistan.*
 - *The U.S. must work with the Afghan negotiators to use these points of leverage to gain concessions from the Taliban including a ceasefire and agreeing to a compromise solution.*

6. **Concessions to the Taliban Must be Matched with Commitments to the ANDSF, Enabling a Carrot and Stick Approach to the intra-Afghan Peace Talks**
 - *Enhancing the U.S. commitment to the ANDSF and maintaining a strong ANDSF force posture will provide much needed leverage to the Afghan negotiators at the intra-Afghan peace talks.*

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7. **Support Afghan Youth Through Domestic Civil Society Led Construction of Primary and Secondary Schools, and Overseas/Online University Scholarship Programs**
 - *Afghanistan's youth, especially girls, have benefited from a free national education system beginning in primary school and continuing through university. However, there are not enough schools and universities to accommodate all of Afghanistan's youth.*
 - *Many Afghan civil society organizations have the capability to quickly and affordably design, build and transfer schools to the Ministry of Education. These groups should be empowered to take the lead on school development.*
 - *More than half of the 200,000 Afghan high school students who pass the national university entrance exam do not attend university due to lack of capacity. The U.S. should increase scholarship programs, such as the Fulbright program, for qualified Afghan students to attend U.S., international, and online universities.*

8. **Implement an Immediate Plan for Contractors to Continue Providing Mission Critical Equipment Maintenance and Logistics Supply to the ANDSF**

Contractors funded and managed by CSTC-A maintain aircraft, combat ground vehicles, and provide mission critical supplies such as ammunition and fuel. The Afghan Government cannot afford, or effectively administer any of these high dollar value contracts. Without support from existing CSTC-A contractors ANDSF combat readiness will drastically deteriorate, if not collapse.

9. **Maintain an "Off-Budget" Transparent Outcomes Based Funding Approach for NDAA Appropriated Funds with Real-Time Oversight and Audit from a Joint Task Force of Members of Congress and the Afghan Parliament**
 - *On ground audits by the Afghan Parliament have found that corruption and non-performance of ANDSF contracts and funding administered by the Afghan Government ("On-Budget" contracts) continue to put U.S. taxpayer dollars and ANDSF combat readiness in jeopardy. "Off-Budget" contracts and funding administered by CSTC-A are working well and free from corruption, ensuring the ANDSF gets the appropriate equipment and support.*
 - *The Afghan Parliament will provide real-time oversight and feedback to Congress about budgeting, procurement, spending, contract execution, and the government's adherence to the rule of law. Congress can make funding contingent on outcomes and results of oversight.*
 - *The Afghan Parliament has a mandate from Afghan voters to represent their interests in government and promote government reform initiatives.*

10. **Provide Immediate Relief for Afghan Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) Applicants that Were Employed by or on Behalf of U.S. Forces**
 - *Many Afghan citizens have risked their lives to support U.S. and coalition troops on the battlefield. Now these brave men and women and their families face threats of violence and retribution from the Taliban and other terrorist groups. Thousands of SIV applicants are stranded in Afghanistan, forced to overcome bureaucratic hurdles and endure a very lengthy waiting period. SIV applications should be prioritized and streamlined to eliminate delays and avoid further loss of life.*

ABOUT US

The Afghanistan-U.S. Democratic Peace and Prosperity Council (DPPC) is an organization dedicated to furthering a long-term alliance, forged in a strong mutual commitment to shared ideals, between Afghans and Americans.

Based in Washington, D.C., the DPPC promotes policies to ensure a sustainable peace process, strong democratic institutions, women's and children's rights, anti-corruption, good governance, and economic development. The DPPC's mission is to support legislation and policies that provide a better future for young Afghans and help reformers in Afghanistan's Parliament move the country along the path to self-sufficiency.

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